Never Too Late...

2 Samuel 18:33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Intro

Brook’s daddy was an important man.

- Charles Francis Adams was the ambassador to Great Britain under the Lincoln administration.
  - When Brook was 8 years old something special happened in his life.
    - He noted in his diary: “Went fishing with my father, it was the most glorious day of my life!”
- Through the next 40 years he never forgot that day.
  - He recalled it again and again in his diary, speaking often of that special day he spent with his dad.
- When his father passed away a 48 year old Brook had been so impacted by that day that he eagerly thumbed through his father’s diary to see what he had recorded on that special day.
  - When he finally found the date, there was only a few words written there.
    - It said, “Went fishing with my son. A day wasted.”

This morning, I want to preach for a while to the Dads.

- Your greatest calling in this life, Dad, is your role as a father.
  - Nothing is more important.
  - Nothing matters more.
- In the grand scheme of both life and eternity the greatest impact you will ever have is the impact you have on your children!
  - The most important work you ever do for God will be the work you do within the walls of your own home.
- When this life is over, when you come to the end, all of the things that you have labored for will be wasted, all of your life savings will be worthless, and all of your worldly possessions will be hollow.
- The only things of value that you will leave behind in this world will be your children!
  - They will be your living legacy.
  - They will carry your name, your memory, and even your life into the future.
- Please, gentlemen don’t make the mistake of thinking that the time you spend with your kids is somehow secondary to more important pursuits in this life!
  - They are your greatest investment!
Never Too Late

A King’s King
David was a remarkable king.
- Of all the heroic characters that fill the pages of the Old Testament, David is among the greatest.
  - His accomplishments are unrivaled.
  - He was a fearful warrior and a respected King.
  - He was a skilled composer and a mighty conqueror.
  - He was a gifted unifier and an unparalleled organizer.
  - He was the only king in the history of the world that was chosen because he was a man after God’s own heart.
- As a statesman he was without peer, his diplomacy bonded together the often-fractured 12 tribes of Israel into one united mighty nation.
  - His leadership propelled his people into a time of peace and prosperity like none that they had ever experienced before or since.
- David’s stature was so great, in the history of the people of God, that one of the most well known titles of Jesus Christ would be, “Son of David.”

David was a lot of things: shepherd, musician, soldier, king, and even a prophet of God.
- Each of his roles had its distinct challenges and David rose to meet those challenges in an extraordinary way.
  - He was successful, it would seem, in everything that he did.
- However, as remarkable as David was, I have to point out, this morning that he was an abysmal failure as a father.

Terrible Father
David’s failures as a father start with his failures as a man.
- At the height of his success, when everything seemed to be going so well,
  - some deep-seated flaws in David’s character were revealed.
- When he should have been marching with his armies, leading them to victory,
  - David chose to take a vacation of sorts and remain behind to enjoy the privileges of being king.
- While his armies slept in the field,
  - David reclined in the luxury of his palace.
- While his men were locked in life and death struggles,
  - David was enraptured by the pomp and circumstance of the kingdom.
- While they were staring down death,
  - David was casting his gaze on things he should never have seen.
- It was a story that has been played out a million times across the span of human history:
  - A lustful look led to a sinful encounter
    - and that secret rendezvous resulted in an illegitimate pregnancy.
Israel’s great king, it would appear, was captive to his own lust.
  - Condemned by his sin and haunted by the fear that his failures would become known
    - he reasoned that murder was the only way to cover his wrongs.
  - A simple command was given,
    - a secret letter was carried,
    - and a naively loyal soldier was betrayed.
  - It was the perfect crime.
    - David hid his sin on a battlefield far away.

However, as you well know, what David thought was well hidden from men, was never hidden from God.
- David didn’t get away with anything.
  - Nathan confronted David with the knowledge that his sin was known
    - and even though David sincerely repented,
    - judgment was loosed on his home.
- What follows is a sordid tale of betrayal, rape and even murder.
  - David’s son, Amnon, perhaps emboldened by his father’s own transgressions,
    - became obsessed with his own half-sister, Tamar.
  - Eventually, he lured her to his bedroom and savagely raped her.
- According to Scripture, “...when king David heard of these things he was exceedingly grieved”
  - but he didn’t do anything about it
    - because Amnon was his firstborn
    - and he didn’t want to hurt his feelings.

What a tragedy!
- Gentlemen, your children need you to be more to them than just their buddy and their friend.
  - They need you to be their Dad.
  - They need you to teach them right and wrong.
  - And they need you to discipline them when they do wrong!
- David loved his son so much that he spared him.
  - That’s what the bible says.
- The problem is that David had a flawed concept of what love is.
  - If you truly love your children you will teach them that there are consequences to their actions.
- Amnon had committed a serious sin but David remained strangely quiet.
  - When his children needed to see decisive action from their father,
    - when they needed to see that he would not tolerate such bold crimes,
      - even from his beloved first born,
    - what they saw instead was a Dad who held his peace and did nothing.
The situation called for a strong, courageous father, but David was weak and fearful.

I can’t help but wonder if David’s failure to act wasn’t related to his own personal failures.

- Perhaps he blamed himself and his own sordid actions
  - for the failures of his favorite son.
- David has to have realized that his children were acting out what they had seen him do.
  - He has to have born some of the guilt within himself.
- Mark my words, fathers, your kids learn much more from your actions than they do from your words!
  - You might be able to fool the world,
    - you might be able to fool your friends,
      - but you aren’t fooling your children.
      - They know who and what you really are.

When David failed to take any action against Amnon for the rape of his sister,

- another of the king’s sons took it upon himself to avenge his sister.
  - Absalom was furious that David failed to reaffirm his daughter’s honor and punish his brother.
    - Ultimately his anger consumed him.
- He plotted and connived until he conceived a plan to murder his brother, Amnon.
  - Once again, David failed to respond to the brutal vengeful actions of yet another son.
    - Absalom fled the kingdom and David floundered between grief and indecision.
      - He neither punished Absalom nor allowed him to return home for three long years.
  - Finally David was persuaded to let Absalom return to Jerusalem,
    - but still angry over what he had done,
      - the king refused to talk to his son or even to see him.

The wounds never healed.

- Absalom was eaten up with bitterness and hatred for the father who had failed, in every way, to be what a father should have been.
  - As time marched on, David may have tried to brush the past under the rug but Absalom never let it go.
    - His bitterness finally consumed him and compelled him to raise an army and incite a rebellion against his father.
- The war that followed culminated in a decisive battle that would determine the future of the kingdom.
  - Before the battle, a heavyhearted king presented his own generals with contradictory orders that they would ultimately ignore.
It was his desire that they would crush the rebellion but spare his son.

Regret
David spent the fateful day of that great battle in nervous anticipation and dreadful fear for the safety of his rebellious son and the wellbeing of his kingdom.

- Somewhere in the middle of that long, tense, day
  - I can’t help but believe that David finally came to terms with the fact that all of this was his fault.
    - If only he had been the father that he should have been, none of this would have happened.
    - If he had been there for his kids, perhaps Tamar would have never been raped.
    - If he had reacted in a godly manner, perhaps Amnon would never have been murdered.
  - At that moment, all the affairs of state that kept him from spending time with his kids must have seemed so trivial.
    - At that moment all of the important things that he had accomplished in his royal reign paled in comparison to the most important thing of all that he had utterly failed at.
  - I don’t know the myriad of critical things that distracted David from fulfilling his role as father to his kids,
    - but I do know that as he waited for news from the battlefield,
    - none of those things really mattered anymore.

Finally it happened, the messengers arrive from the battlefield.

- They brought a mixture of good news and bad.
  - King David’s forces had prevailed, the kingdom was secure but another son was dead.
    - And his blood was on his father’s hands.
  - Our text has to be one of the most tragic scriptures in the whole Bible.
    - The sun and wind of the centuries have failed to dry the tears or still the anguish of this exceedingly sorrowful cry:
      - “...O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” 2 Samuel 18:33
  - In that moment David finally laid the blame right where it belonged, squarely at his own feet.
    - I would God that I had died, he lamented.
      - I would God that I had not failed my children.
      - I would God that I had not been so blind.
      - I would God that I hadn’t have been so caught up in everything else.
      - I would God that I had made time for my children!

Fathers, invest yourself in your kids!
Fathers I want to remind you this morning that your most important role in this life is the role of a father.

- Our identities are closely linked to our accomplishments
  - and, for many of us, our careers are a big part of who we are.
- We garner important feelings of accomplishment and self-worth from our performance on our jobs.
  - However, I want to remind you this morning that your greatest accomplishment in this life doesn’t come with a paycheck.
    - Your children are the most important investment that you will ever make.

I told the ministry team in our meeting this month about something that I experienced earlier this year.

- While working on the church in a day, as we neared the conclusion of that project, I took a break under the tent for a few moments.
  - And, as I sat there, I began to watch brother O’Connell’s son, Asher, playing in a big pile of sand that the brick crew was using to mix mortar.
- Something happened in that moment, as my mind took me back, through the years, to the days when my boys were small enough to play in the sand.
  - Once upon a time, my wife had a crazy idea.
    - She wanted our boys to have a sandbox, but not just any sandbox; she wanted it to be a boat!
  - She first tried to talk me into using my Jon boat as a sand box, but, when I refused, she found an old ski boat in Monette that a riverboat captain was willing to give to us.
    - So we drove over there and loaded it onto a trailer.
    - I’ll never forget, that fiberglass boat was tremendously heavy, even without a motor on it.
  - When we got it home, it took a backhoe to unload that thing and drag it into our back yard.
    - A friend of ours dug a hole, and helped me bury the boat in the ground as if it were riding on the water.
    - Then we brought in a whole dump truck load of sand, to fill that boat!

It was the best sandbox ever made and my boys loved it.

- But as I sat there that afternoon watching another young boy play in the sand I realized that life had happened to us.
  - My boys have long since outgrown the sand box and there will never, ever, be another opportunity for me to play with them in the sand.
    - What struck me so strongly that day was the fact that during those years I was so busy that I hardly ever had the time to play with them in that big sandbox.
- So many things were going on.
My days were spent working a job,
- my evenings were spent working on building a church
  - and my Saturdays were spent either fishing, hunting, or working on the church.
- There was very little time left over for the boys
  - and, to be honest, I’m afraid that I viewed that time just like Brooks daddy did,
    - as wasted time that could have been better spent doing something else.
- But it dawned on me, as I watched young Asher playing in the sand, that nothing in the world could have been more important than spending time with those two boys of mine.
  - Even worse, I realized, much as King David did on that fateful day, that I will never get those squandered opportunities back.
    - I can’t roll back the hands of time.
    - I can’t go back and do it over again.
      - No matter how much I wish I could,
      - no matter how strong the desire,
      - that time has forever passed!

But I made a decision right then that I intend to honor for the rest of my life.
- Nothing is more important to me than my boys.
  - For two years, ever since my Father-in-law passed away, the boys and I have been talking about buying a boat.
- This spring I went out and bought one because I realize, if I don’t spend that time with them now,
  - there’s gonna come a day when it’s too late.
- If you try to reach me on a Saturday, you are liable to learn that I’m out on the water with my boys,
  - or off at the gun range with my boys,
  - or traipsing through the woods with my boys...
- It’s not because I don’t have important stuff to do,
  - it’s not because all of my weeks work is done,
    - it is because there’s nothing in this world more important to me than those two boys
      - and I don’t get very long to impress upon them the things that really matter in this life.
- In just a few more years they will be gone.
  - In just a few more years they will grow up and move on.
    - I have made up my mind that I’m going to make the most of the days that I have right now
      - to do everything in my power to invest myself in my sons.
Dads, it is never too late to become the godly father that your children need you to be.

- It's never too late to invest yourself in your kids.
  - It's never too late to change the trajectory of your relationship with your children.
- Why don’t you determine this morning to be the best Dad that you can be?
  - Why don’t you make up your mind, right here and right now, to spend as much time as you can with your children?
    - You can affirm them in ways that no one else can.
    - You can teach them lessons that no one else can.
    - You can establish them in this faith in a way that nobody else will ever be able to do.
      - That’s your role.
      - It’s your most important task in this life.

**Solomon: Never too late.**

David may have been a great man but, just like the rest of us, in the end he was just a man.

- He made some huge mistakes in his life.
  - Mixed in with his great accomplishments are some terrible failures.
- But that day, as he mourned the loss of a son, David must have realized what a tragic mistake that he had made.
  - He couldn’t go back and fix it.
  - He couldn’t call back the wasted opportunities.
  - He couldn’t undo the bad choices,
    - but he could invest himself in his remaining children.
- It is never too late to become the father that you know you should be.
  - Years later, when David was lying on his deathbed, he wanted his son by his side.
    - Solomon was his chosen heir.
- I can’t help but believe that David corrected some of the errors that he made with Amnon and Absalom as he endeavored to raise Solomon.
  - And now, as he stands poised to step into eternity he imparts this wisdom to his son:

**1 Kings 2:2-3**

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;
3 And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

- Gentlemen, its never too late to show your children what it means to be strong in the Lord.
Never Too Late

- It's never too late to charge them to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes.
- There's a big difference between Solomon and Absolom.
  - Solomon would carry on the legacy of David,
    - he would build the temple that David had envisioned,
    - he would walk in the ways of David.
  - The story of Solomon reinforces the message that I'm trying to convey this morning,
    - it is never too late to invest yourself in your children!

Close
The man came home late, after a long day at work.
- He was tired and irritated, and only wanted to make it to his recliner.
  - But a small timid voice interrupted his evening
    - as his young son met him at the door.
  - "Daddy, may I ask you a question?"
    - "Sure, son, just make it quick."

- The question came out of the blue, it was not at all what the father expected:
  - "Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?"
    - Angry he respond,
      - "That's none of your business!
      - What makes you ask such a thing?"
  - "I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?",
    - pleaded the little blue eyed boy.
      - "If you must know, I make $20 an hour", said the Dad.
  - "Oh," the little boy replied, head bowed, brow furrowed in deep thought.

- Finally he looked up and said, "Daddy, may I borrow $10 from you?"
  - The father was furious.
    - "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make
      - is just so you can borrow some to buy a silly toy or some other nonsense,
      - then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed.
        - Think about why you're being so selfish.
        - I work long, hard hours everyday and don’t have time for such childish games."

- The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door.
  - The man sat down and started to get even madder about the little boy's questioning.
    - How dare he ask such questions only to get some money.
• However, after an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think he may have been a little hard on his son.
  o Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that $10
  ▪ and he really didn’t ask for money very often.

• The man went to the door of the little boy’s room and opened the door.
  o “Are you asleep son?” – he asked
  ▪ “No daddy, I’m awake.” – came the soft reply.
• “I’ve been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier.” – said the man.
  o “It’s been a long day and I took my aggravation out on you.
  ▪ Here’s that $10 you asked for.”

• The little boy sat straight up, beaming.
  o “Oh, thank you daddy!” – he yelled.
  ▪ Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some more crumpled up bills.
• The man, seeing the boy already had money, started to get angry again.
  o The little boy slowly counted out his money, then looked up at the man. “
  ▪ Why did you want more money,” grumbled the dad, “if you already had so much?”

• “Because I didn’t have enough at first,” came the timid reply, “but now I do.”
  o “Daddy, there’s $20 here.
  o Can I buy an hour of your time?
  o Please come home early tomorrow. I just want to play with you.

Gentlemen, it really doesn’t matter how old your kids are, the thing they want most in this life is affirmation from their daddy.

They value you and your opinion more than they value anything else in this life.

On this Father’s Day let me challenge you to be the Dad that they desperately need you to be!

Order of Service

Welcome / Theme – Pastor

Strong and Courageous.

• Joshua 1:9 -- Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage;
  be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee
  whithersoever thou goest.
• It was a pivotal time for Joshua.
Moses was dead.
The role of national leader had been passed to him.
The promised land lay before them but it was occupied by a fierce enemy.

- In that moment, the word of the Lord came to Joshua to instill confidence in him.
  - God admonished him to Be Strong and Be Courageous.
  - And he also reminded him of the source of that strength and courage:
    - For the Lord thy God is with thee!

- Fatherhood is not for the faint of heart.
  - Especially in this day and age, it’s a challenging thing.
  - But men, this morning we want to encourage you
    - Be Strong.
    - Be Courageous.
    - The Lord is with you!

Angie – FATHER

Dads & Daughters – Ryan & Andrew

Song/Video: Dads & Daughters

Life Lessons – Harrison

Star Dad – Clayton

Dads are special (whipping story) – Pastor

Dads Stand

Gifts to Dads

Prayer – Rocklan